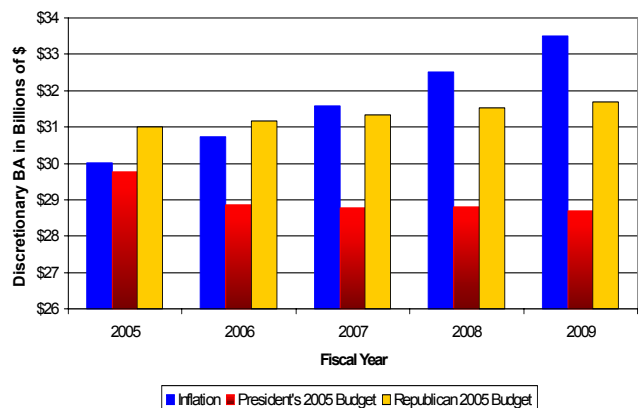


Republican Budget for Veterans: Time Again for More Sacrifice

- ***Republican Budget is Less than Needed for Veterans' Health Care*** — On a bipartisan basis, the Committee on Veterans Affairs recommended that \$2.5 billion more than the President's budget was needed to maintain vital health care programs for veterans. Nevertheless, the House Republican budget provides \$1.3 billion less than what the Committee recommended for 2005. In contrast, the Democratic budget provides the full Committee-recommended level of \$32.3 billion for 2005, and includes \$6.6 billion more than the Republican budget over the next five years. This will:
 - ▶ improve access and reduce waiting time for all veterans;
 - ▶ meet statutory requirements for long-term care by increasing the current number of nursing home beds to 1998 levels;
 - ▶ reduce or eliminate the increased copayments (\$135 million) and enrollment fees (\$268 million) proposed in the President's budget;
 - ▶ increase funds for medical facility construction and renovation; and
 - ▶ provide the resources necessary for more responsive reviews of claims and appeals.
- ***Republican Budget Fails to Keep Pace with Inflation*** — The Republican budget quickly falls behind the amount needed to maintain these programs at their current levels. In 2007, the budget is \$227 million less than what the Department of Veterans' Affairs needs to keep pace with inflation. Over five years, the Republican budget cuts \$1.6 billion from the total needed to maintain services at the 2004 level.
- ***Veterans' Health Care Imperiled*** — Failure to match the recommendation of the Committee on Veterans Affairs will make it very difficult for the VA to meet the cost increases of expected changes in health care utilization of its enrollees, or to meet current payroll, inflation and non-discretionary workload adjustments. This could be the difference between treating 170,000 unique veterans, or, alternatively, paying the salaries of 13,000 VA staff needed to treat veterans.

Republican Veterans Funding Does Not Keep Pace with Inflation



(Continued)

Veterans Reject Republican Proposals

Here's what veterans have to say about the President's budget:

- **The Disabled American Veterans:** It is clear that veterans are not a national priority to this administration, and the President's budget plan attempts to shift the burden for funding veterans health care to those brave men and women who have served and sacrificed for our country. It is utterly disgraceful to shortchange America's veterans at a time when this government has placed so many of our troops in harm's way in the war on terror, considering that many of them will need VA medical care for decades to come. (February 4, 2004)
- **Vietnam Veterans of America:** The budget proposed by the President for veterans health care for the next fiscal year is not only inadequate, it's an insult to veterans. It represents a clear-cut case of misplaced priorities. The same budget that calls for generous funding to wage war ignores the real needs of those who return from the war zone, and will impose undue hardship on them. (February 4, 2004)

Here's what veterans have to say about the Republican budget:

- **The Paralyzed Veterans of America:** "As the House of Representatives prepares to consider the FY 2005 Budget Resolution, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) strongly urges you to oppose the resolution. Despite an increase over the President's Budget Request released in February, the budget resolution does not provide adequate funding for veterans' health care to meet the needs of sick and disabled veterans seeking care from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health system." (March 23, 2004)
- **American Veterans (AMVETS):** In May 2003, the President's Task Force to Improve Health Care Delivery for Our Nation's Veterans reported chronic under-funding that left VA unable to meet its obligations to veterans. The entire situation is intolerable and is certainly no way for Congress to express our nation's gratitude for the sacrifice and service of its military veterans. AMVETS strongly urges members of the Committee to support [Representative Chet Edwards'] proposal and lift spending for FY 2005 to the bipartisan level recommended by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. This level of funding is essential and without it those services sick and disabled veterans earned and deserve will not be there when they need them. (March 10, 2004)